

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of producing a fiber board characterized in that it comprises the following processes ~~(a)~~ ~~(f)~~ comprising:

(a) a separating process of a bast portion wherein the bast portion of a kenaf is separated from a stem core portion,

(b) a fiberizing process wherein kenaf fibers are obtained from the bast portion of the kenaf by defibrating the bast portion of the kenaf,

(c) a preparing process of a mat wherein the kenaf fibers obtained by said defibrating treatment are aggregated to form a fiber mat ~~comprising the~~ comprising kenaf fibers having an average length of 10 - 200 mm and an average diameter of 10 - 300  $\mu$ m,

(d) a supplying process of an adhesive agent wherein the fiber mat is impregnated with a thermosetting adhesive agent by supplying the thermosetting adhesive agent into the fiber mat,

(e) a drying process of the adhesive agent wherein the fiber mat impregnated with the thermosetting adhesive agent is dried in an atmosphere of 120°C or less while an inner portion of the fiber mat is sucked from one side thereof, and

(f) a molding process wherein the fiber mat obtained in the drying process of the adhesive agent is molded by heating said

fiber mat under pressure to form a fiber board having a density of 600 - 900 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

2. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~claim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising an adjusting process of an add-on, in which the fiber mat impregnated with the thermosetting adhesive agent is pressed in such a way that an amount of the thermosetting adhesive agent impregnated in the fiber mat is 130 % or less relative to a weight of the fiber mat, wherein said adjusting process is added-performed before the drying process of ~~an~~ the adhesive agent.

3. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber mat according to ~~claim 2 characterized in that~~ claim 2, wherein the method of pressing the fiber mat in the adjusting process of an add-on is a method wherein the fiber mat impregnated with the thermosetting adhesive agent is passed between a pair of rollers.

4. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~claim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising a drying process of the fiber mat, in which a moisture content of the fiber mat is adjusted to 25 percent by weight or

less, wherein said further drying process is added performed before  
the supplying process of ~~an~~ the adhesive agent.

5. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~elaim 1 characterized~~ claim 1, wherein in that when the fiber mat impregnated with the thermosetting adhesive agent is dried in the drying process of ~~an~~ the adhesive agent, said fiber mat is dried while a surface thereof is contacted with an air stream whose temperature is 120°C or less.

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~elaim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising an adjusting process of a moisture content in the bast portion, in which a moisture content of the bast portion of kenaf separated from the stem core portion is adjusted to 10 - 40 percent by weight, ~~is added~~ wherein said further adjusting process is performed before the fiberizing process.

8. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~elaim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, further

comprising a coating process of a second adhesive agent, in which the second adhesive agent whose impregnability is lower than that of the thermosetting adhesive agent impregnated in the fiber mat is applied on a surface of the fiber board obtained in the molding process, ~~is added~~ wherein said further coating process is performed after the molding process.

9. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber mat according to ~~claim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein when the fiber mat is heated under pressure in the molding process, a fine fiber sheet comprising fine fibers whose diameter is smaller than that of the kenaf fibers constituting the fiber mat is laminated on the surface of the fiber mat, and ~~then~~ then said laminate is heated under pressure.

10. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~claim 9 characterized in that~~ claim 9, wherein after the laminate of the fiber mat and fine fiber sheet is heated under pressure, holes which penetrate through the fine fiber sheet are arranged on said sheet.

11. (currently amended) The method of producing a fiber board according to ~~claim 1 characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the thermosetting adhesive agent is a phenolic resin having an average molecular weight of 400 - 700, said phenolic resin comprising 10 - 40 percent by weight of monomer and 60 - 90 percent by weight of polymer having an average molecular weight of 200 - 2,000.